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Testimony from Eric Rogers of CT Association of Real Estate Investors (CAREI), CT Property Owners Alliance (CTPOA) and CT Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO)

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My name is Eric Rogers and I am a member of CT Association of Real Estate Investors, CT Property Owners Alliance and CT Coalition of Property Owners. I have owned and operated several units in central Connecticut for more than a decade.

I provide the following testimony:

SB 105 - Tenant's Right To Housing. Oppose.

Most (85% or more) evictions are a result of non-payment of rent. I can appreciate providing free legal advice to residents, but in the vast majority of cases, it is as simple as paying rent. Money towards legal advice is likely much better spent on rent assistance – this will go directly to the residents that need help paying rent and bills. It is not clear who this bill really supports, as non-payment of rent cases can be solved by a resident getting caught up on their rent payment.

SB 109 - Concealing criminal records. Oppose.

Housing Providers need to be able to provide a safe environment for their residents. Application screening is one of the most important tools a Housing Provider has to make a decision on a resident. Concealing certain criminal records disables the Housing Provider from making a sound decision, and most importantly puts other residents in the building at risk. How would this law be seen when we have an injury or death that resulted from a repeat criminal that the Housing Provider was unable to detect because the past criminal records were concealed? I rent to elderly individuals, as well as to single women with children. I need to take applicant selection seriously. Furthermore, I talk to many Housing Providers about this – most would review an applicant's criminal history and factor it along with all other attributes. Depending on the crime, situation, etc., the person may still be accepted. The difference is that the Housing Provider is able to make a decision based on complete information. Concealing this information prevents an informed decision from being made and potentially places other residents in harm. Perhaps the State would like to dedicate certain housing units for past criminals then.

HB 5123 - Strict liability for elevated lead levels. Oppose.

This law is simply unfair to Housing Providers, especially here in Connecticut, where the majority of the multifamily housing stock is older than 1978. The reason is that because of the age of most buildings, a child may ingest lead in a number of places, including other homes, businesses and even schools. Since a) a Housing Provider has no control over other areas (besides the property), where a child may come into contact with lead, and b) insurance providers do not protect a Housing Provider, this bill puts an unfair onus on Housing Providers. Town health officials are even opposed to this bill and think it is not sensible.

HB 5126 - Capping late fees. Oppose.

As a Housing Provider, I impose a small late fee to incentivize residents to pay on time (by the 10th). This is an administrative fee which pays for the cost to collect it. The reason why it is so important that residents pay by the 10th, is because other bills (namely debt service) are also due at this time. As you likely know, the late fee on a mortgage can be \$75+, and applies even if you are one day late, and often unforgiving. Thus, it is important that residents pay on time so the bills associated with running the building can be paid. Furthermore, I have already given residents the option to reduce accumulated late fees by paying on time. Guess what

happened? They still did not pay on time. Even giving residents free credits was not an incentive to pay on time. Therefore, I do not believe a staggered day late fee increase will instill the right behavior. It is the same residents that tend to pay late, regardless of the late fee amount or incentive to do otherwise.